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00/0818
24 AUG 2010

CLAIMS

1. A method of viral marketing comprising:
providing a commercial message in an electronic medium;
5 providing the commercial message to a recipient;
the recipient forwarding the commercial message to a later generation recipient;
electronically tracking an aspect of the recipient's forwarding of the commercial
message; and
10 using the electronic tracking as a basis for rewarding the recipient for forwarding
the commercial message.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the commercial message comprises an
advertisement.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the commercial message comprises a company
logo.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the commercial message is co-branded.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the commercial message comprises a political
message.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of providing the commercial message to
the recipient comprises sending the message to the recipient via e-mail.

20 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of forwarding the commercial message
comprises sending the message to a later generation recipient via e-mail

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the recipient is a first generation recipient.

25 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of forwarding comprises the recipient
indirectly forwarding the commercial message by providing another entity with an
address of the later generation recipient, and the entity causing the forwarding to
occur.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of forwarding the commercial message comprises forwarding at least a portion of the commercial message that includes an advertisement.
- 5 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of forwarding comprising the recipient forwarding the commercial message without modification to the later generation recipient via e-mail.
12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of forwarding comprising the recipient supplementing the commercial message.
- 10 13. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of forwarding comprising the recipient modifying the commercial message.
14. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of tracking comprises tracking forwarding of the commercial message through at least two generations.
15. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of tracking comprises tracking forwarding of the commercial message through at least three generations.
16. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of tracking comprises tracking forwarding of the commercial message through at least three contiguous generations.
17. The method of claim 1 wherein the aspect of the forwarding being tracked comprises a forwarding date and a forwarding address.
- 20 18. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of rewarding comprises providing a reward that varies depending upon a total number of later generation recipients to which the commercial message has been forwarded.
19. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of rewarding comprises providing a reward that varies depending upon a number of generations to which the commercial message has been forwarded.
- 25 20. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of rewarding comprises providing a reward selected from the list consisting of redeemable points and e-money.

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21. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing a supplier of the commercial message with a report summarizing a forwarding history over multiple generations.
22. The method of claim 1 further comprising providing the recipient with a report summarizing a forwarding history over multiple generations.

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